

VZCZCXYZ0007
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHMS #0150 0511020
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 201020Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9286
INFO RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 000150

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP
TREASURY FOR OTA VALVO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/19/2018
TAGS: [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [PTER](#) [MU](#)
SUBJECT: UN SPONSORS AML/CTF WORKSHOP IN MUSCAT

Classified By: DCM Alfred F. Fonteneau for Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (SBU) On February 19, Econoff discussed a recent two-day seminar on anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorism financing (CTF) with Mahran Yarub al-Barwani, Director of Anti Money Laundering, Central Bank of Oman. Barwani noted that the event, sponsored by the Omani National Committee for Combating Money Laundering ("National Committee") and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, attracted 30 participants from the Central Bank; Ministries of National Economy, Commerce and Industry, Justice, and Housing; Royal Oman Police; and Capital Market Authority. The workshop addressed the legal challenges facing regulators in detecting and investigating incidences of money laundering, in advance of promulgation of Oman's new "Law on Anti-Money Laundering." Barwani noted that in the wake of rapidly rising housing prices in Oman, the CBO is working with the Housing Ministry to take a closer look at real estate transactions.

¶2. (C) The workshop is part of a series of training programs under the Omani Program for Anti-Money Laundering (OPFAM). The government launched OPFAM in August 2006 to promote greater cohesion among Omani policy makers regulators, law enforcement agencies, and financial institutions. Originally under the auspices of the CBO, ownership for the program has now shifted to the National Committee. OPFAM sponsored two programs early in 2007 for financial system authorities in advance of an eventual FATF evaluation. It then went dormant until now, a result of National Committee dissatisfaction with ExlSpaceStrategy, the original OPFAM contractor. One CBO official told Econoff that after running into "ethical concerns" with the two Indian owners of ExlSpaceStrategy (one of whom was a former CBO employee), the committee decided to reach out to multiple providers for program content.
GRAPPO